

One-hundred-fifty-eighth meeting
Water and Wastewater Advisory Council
Wednesday, October 8, 2014
Bozeman, Montana

CALL TO ORDER The one-hundred-fifty-eighth meeting of the Water and Wastewater Operator's Advisory Council was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by Council President, Roger Skogen. This meeting was held in room 232 in the Strand Student Union Center on the MSU Campus during the 81st Annual Fall Water School in Bozeman.

Council members present:
Roger Skogen, Chair, Andrew Loudermilk, John Alston, Crystal Richards, Grant Burroughs and Jon Dilliard.
Don Coffman was absent.

Department personnel attending all or portions of the meeting: Julie Allen and Reta Therriault, Operator Certification Technicians.

Minutes Approved	Roger called for approval of the April 2, 2014 minutes. John Alston motioned to accept the minutes as they stood. The motion was seconded by Andy Loudermilk and approved.
Advisory Council Officer & Member Update	Roger introduced Crystal as this was her first physical attendance since her appointment. Julie explained that Grant's term expires 10/16/14 and that he has opted not to reapply for another term. The application to be considered for appointment by the Governor was discussed and Grant mentioned the need for a resume. Julie said the process was the same for all boards and councils where members are appointed by the Governor. All members reviewed the contact sheet. Crystal saw a typo in her email address. All other information was correct. (Julie corrected typo, 10/16/14.)
PWS Update	Jon Dilliard spoke to the OpCert budget and stated that fees are up. Only the equivalent of two years fees can be kept in reserve so the program is spending some of the fees to keep within the limits. John Alston asked if WIFIA (Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Authority) would have an influence on the program's SRF funding. Jon D said he wasn't sure if it would affect the SRF monies. He stated that the budget is based on projection and provided a handout to illustrate this. Jon D shared an updated organizational chart and stated that there are plans to fill the Rules Manager position but for now it is being held for vacancy savings

	<p>for the department.</p> <p>John A asked about a per tap fee increase and if that was going to be pursued with the legislature this session. Jon D said there are no plans to do so and that the bureau will use SRF funds and fees because they are up right now. He suggested that maybe the next legislative session would be approached to raise fees. He also mentioned that they are looking at other creative ways to get the funding needed to run the bureau.</p>
Water Schools and In-Office Exams, Compliance Status Report and Enforcement Update	<p>Julie reported on the 2014 MRWS Conference exams and the Billings, Kalispell and Helena Spring School exams. The low pass rate at the MRWS Conference was noted by all and discussion on possible training issues ensued. Julie mentioned that keeping a core team of trainers seemed to help and she cited the high pass rate at Kalispell and the MRWS trainers. She also mentioned that the large systems such as Bozeman and Missoula have good in-house training practices.</p> <p>Julie reported that the compliance percentages were getting back to a high rate, even with the revocation of operators. Many systems have been quick to get operators in place when they find out their operator is no longer certified.</p>
Renewals and CECs	<p>Reta provided a handout that broke down renewals, revokes, fees and the average age of operators. 1,675 renewal invoices were mailed out in April, 2014 and as of 10/2/2014, 142 operators were revoked. There are 1544 current active operators and their average age is 51.75.</p>
Other Issues	<p>Contract Operators: Roger said that after reviewing the examples of other states' contract operator policies, he felt a compilation of them might work because they each had good points. Reta suggested a letter to systems for them to describe and denote what their operator does. Grant agreed the responsibility needed to be put on the community being served by a contract operator. He felt that "in responsible charge" needed to be defined for systems and not just operators. Roger agreed and said the community needs to define the duties of their operator and put it in writing. John A asked about the information on the PWS yellow sheets and was told the sheet was to update and/or verify contact information for systems. A short discussion about contract law ensued and John A mentioned that the council did not want to get involved at that level. It was agreed by all. Andy suggested it was a matter of educating systems and owners. Reta mentioned that the operator does not have to be on site to be the operator in charge. Roger said that a system needs to know what an operator in responsible charge does and suggested devising a template to educate systems. He asked for ideas. Jon D suggested a checklist of operator's responsibilities and ask systems to fill it out and return to the department. Reta volunteered herself and Julie to come up with a checklist template with email input and output amongst the council members. (Action Item)</p> <p>Standardized exams: Roger asked about the status of standardized exams. Jon D said that it had been an issue to get current operators into new system. He felt that to resolve that issue it would be best to leave current operators as they</p>

	<p>are and bring new operators into the standardized system. He also said that he wants to bring standardized exams and computerized exams into the program at the same time. John A discussed computerized exams and their benefits. He mentioned Prentiss Hall's computerized exam program and asked if ABC used them. Julie said no, they only use AMP sites. Roger asked Jon about how long it would be before the exams could be in place and Jon said at least a couple of years because there may need to be some statute changes made concerning descriptions of systems. Roger asked what the council could do to help and Jon said continue to input on the Bureau's basics and concepts as it progresses with the change. Andy asked about fitting in the old operators into the new standardized classifications and Jon explained that ABC would not allow that. Jon said that a basic outline for getting the project going is the next step. (Action Item)</p> <p>Reta told the council that the METC Training calendar was supposed to go to print in early November so any training dates needed to go to Barb Coffman ASAP.</p>
Date of Next Meeting	The date of the next meeting will be Wednesday, April 1, 2015 at 1pm at the Spring School in Kalispell. Jon suggested looking into video conferencing.
ADJOURN MEETING	At 2:35 p.m. John Alston moved to adjourn the meeting. Jon Dilliard seconded the motion. Roger Skogen adjourned the meeting.